



Natural Heritage &
Endangered Species
Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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MASSACHUSETTS SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

PALE GREEN PINION MOTH
Lithophane viridipallens

Family - Noctuidae
Order - Lepidoptera
Class - Insecta

DESCRIPTION: The Pale Green Pinion Moth is a distinctive species of moth that has a notched forewing.

RANGE: This species occurs in states along the eastern and gulf coasts, from New Hampshire to Louisiana.

DISTRIBUTION IN MASSACHUSETTS: Although once common in Newton (Middlesex County), present populations occur in Plymouth (Plymouth County).

HABITAT: This moth can be found in moderately dry to wet pine or hardwood forests and in swamps. this species prefers pine pitch lowlands in the New Jersey pine barrens..

LIFE HISTORY AND ECOLOGY: Eggs are laid in the spring. The larvae emerge in late April to early June, feeding on acid wetlands shrubs such as Lyonia sp., Leucothoe sp., Clethra sp., Ilex globra, Ilex opaca, and blueberries. Pupation occurs in an underground cocoon. Moths emerge in November.

POPULATION STATUS: The Pale Green Pinion Moth is listed as a species of Special Concern in Massachusetts due to its extreme rarity and declining populations in the state and in other parts of its range.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Current populations should be maintained and monitored and searches made for new populations. Protection from gypsy moth spraying is essential.

REFERENCES: SCHWEITZER, D. 1982. Lithophane viridipallens. Element Abstract. Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program. 7 pp.